



Influenza Activity Spotlight

2012–2013 Season

Issue #10 — December 10, 2012

Reminder: Summit calls are scheduled weekly every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. The next Summit call is scheduled for December 13, 2012. **Please email [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#) if you have any updates on activities to provide to the Summit.**

1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 12/6/2012

Carolyn Bridges facilitated the call during the absence of L.J Tan.

Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)

Scott reported that influenza activity has increased substantially on the national level and continues to be greatest in the southeastern and southcentral United States. Laboratory positive samples continue to be largely a mix of influenza A (H3N2) and B, with a much smaller number of A H1N1.

Approximately 2/3 of the positive samples have been type A and 1/3 type B. Some regional variations exist, however, with type B being the predominant strain in some areas.

Additional information on regional variations is available on [FluView](#). One new case of novel H3N2v was reported from Iowa, bringing the total to 307 since July. The source of infection in the Iowa case is unclear; no swine contact has been identified with the case. Iowa has heightened disease surveillance in response to this new report.

Two new pediatric deaths had been previously reported, but 3 additional cases will be reported in the week 48 information to be released on December 7. Four of these pediatric cases were type A, and 1 was type B. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is hovering at the national baseline level, but the overall trend supports increasing ILI.

Early Season Influenza Coverage Estimates – Erin Kennedy (CDC)

Erin presented information on the early season influenza vaccine coverage estimates derived from: the National Internet Flu Survey (NIFS), an internet panel survey of adults conducted November 2–15, and the National Immunization Survey (NIS), an ongoing telephone survey of parents conducted October 4 – November 17. This information was compared with the NIS and National Flu Survey (NFS) from last season. Although the survey methods for the NIS remained the same over both seasons, the methods used for the adult information changed. Therefore, the estimates for adults and all ages combined may not be directly comparable between the 2 seasons.

Influenza coverage rates for both children and adults appear to be about the same as this time last year, with coverage of approximately 36% for adults and 39% for children. However, childhood vaccine rates show greater variation when broken out by age range, with children 5–12 years of age showing an almost 6% increase in coverage compared to November 2011. Coverage for adults was similar to the previous season and indicated increasing coverage with increased age ranges. Influenza coverage among children showed little variation based on race/ethnicity, but data for adults indicate decreased coverage for Hispanics. Both adults and children were most likely to be

immunized at a doctor's office or other medical facility, though adults also tended to be vaccinated at pharmacies or a workplace location.

An internet panel survey of over 2,000 pregnant women was conducted in November 2012. The survey indicates these pregnant women were much more likely to be vaccinated if a provider recommended and offered vaccine (73.5%) than if a recommendation alone (45.1%) was made. Vaccination coverage for women who had not received a recommendation from their provider was only 15.4%, illustrating the significant importance of providers recommending and offering vaccine. Almost 50% of the women surveyed who had been vaccinated received the vaccine at an OB/GYN or midwife's office. The main reason given by pregnant women who were not vaccinated was concern about vaccine safety, though these women also questioned the vaccine's efficacy and the severity of influenza disease. These results indicate the need for increased education of pregnant women about vaccine safety.

Other results from the internet panel survey indicated the women were less likely to be vaccinated if they were younger (18–24 years of age). Vaccination coverage was highest among Hispanic women, and women with less than a college degree showed lower rates. Women with an additional high risk condition besides pregnancy had higher vaccination coverage than women with no other high risk conditions.

An additional internet panel of approximately 2,000 healthcare personnel (HCP) was conducted during November. Overall, almost 63% of HCP had been vaccinated, a rate similar to last year at this time. When examined by occupation, pharmacists, physicians, and nurses all had rates over 80%. Hospital personnel were more likely to be vaccinated than HCP in other medical settings. In particular, rates need to be increased among staff in long-term care facilities, where less than half of HCP were found to be vaccinated. Similar to the general population, HCP rates increased with increasing age.

Erin noted that the data had several limitations, including the fact that these rates do not reflect end-of-season results. Of particular importance, a different survey was used this season to estimate adult coverage, meaning results for adults may not be comparable to estimates from earlier seasons.

To increase coverage in the general population, CDC recommends that providers continue to recommend influenza vaccination for all patients, as well as ensure they are their staff are vaccinated. Providers also should utilize reminder/recall systems. HCP also are encouraged to continue to recommend and offer influenza vaccine to all pregnant women throughout the season and provide them with accurate information on the risks and benefits of vaccination for both the mother and baby. Education of all HCP, especially aides and non-clinical staff, is important. Previous research indicates greatest improvement in coverage occurs when vaccination is free and offered on multiple days in multiple work settings.

In response to questions, Erin noted that the HCP survey did not cover whether the influenza vaccination was required in the person's workplace. Partners also discussed the high coverage levels of pharmacists and speculated these may be the result of APhA establishing vaccination as a standard of care and training occurring in colleges of pharmacy. One partner reported that Walgreens is requiring all employees to be vaccinated. HCP continue to be concerned about vaccine safety, with almost 30% saying they don't want vaccine or do not think they need it.

Other Items – Carolyn Bridges (CDC)

Carolyn reminded participants that there will be a Summit call next week on December 13. A call on December 20 will occur only if there is significant news from surveillance reports, and the call on December 27 is cancelled due to the holidays.

- 2. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** ending week 48, 2012 (ending December 1, 2012) is available [here](#). Influenza activity is definitely picking up! This site also includes maps of ILINet State Activity levels and the [geographic spread](#) of influenza illness as reported by state and territorial epidemiologists. This map indicates geographic spread of influenza viruses but

does not measure the intensity of influenza activity. CDC's weekly Seasonal Influenza [Key Points](#) (December 7, 2012) have been released. Archives of previous *FluViews* may be found [here](#).

3. Information from CDC

- CDC sends a big thank you to all partners who contributed to making National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) a success! If you held an event that you would like to highlight on the Partner Success Stories [page](#), please submit your activity information to CDC!
- As of December 7, 2012, no additional cases of H3N2v have been reported to CDC since the case reported on Friday, November 30, 2012. Information about the recent H3N2v outbreaks is available [here](#).

4. Increasing Media Reports on Impact of the Current Influenza Season!

[Georgia Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas all reporting significant flu activity:](#)

The flu is arriving early this year, like an unwanted guest popping in for the holiday. And it figures to make you just about as miserable. Some physicians in Georgia are reporting a big jump in sick patients).

[Michigan community closes school:](#) Classes are canceled this week in a mid-Michigan school district following an influenza outbreak

[North Carolina city hit hard:](#) Rates of influenza have risen enough statewide and locally that Pardee Hospital in Hendersonville, NC is asking people not to visit patients in the hospital unless they are next of kin or their closest contact/

[Wisconsin reports higher flu activity:](#) With the number of influenza cases running significantly higher than at this time last year, state health officials are encouraging Wisconsin residents to get flu shots and to tell family members and friends that it's not too late to get protection against the flu.

[Flu widespread across Rhode Island:](#) Rhode Island's cities and towns are holding free vaccination clinics, including for influenza, which is widespread across the state.

[Three Idaho women have recently died from complications of the flu](#)

[Our neighbors to the north reporting early start to flu season:](#) Compared to 2011, there's been a sizeable jump in the number of Ontarians who have tested positive for influenza this season, which began Sept. 1. For the week ending Nov. 24, there were 126 new positive results reported, which brought the total number of cases for this season to 1,085. Only 42 new cases were reported during the same week last year, for a total of 761 cases. Last year was a fairly late start to the influenza season, whereas this year, this can probably be characterized a little bit of an early start," explained Dr. Colin Lee, acting medical director, communicable diseases with Public Health Ontario. And in Calgary, an area school has sent out a [letter](#) warning them that they're dealing with the Influenza A Virus.

5. Synthetic Influenza Vaccine Shows Some Promise for Elderly in Phase I Trials

Inovio Pharmaceuticals, Inc. reported interim [results](#) of a phase I trial that showed that a single dose of its H1N1 universal SynCon® flu vaccine followed with a dose of a seasonal flu vaccine generated protective immune responses in 40% of trial subjects compared with a 20% response rate in elderly patients who received the seasonal flu vaccine alone.

6. Study finds influenza C in kids hospitalized with pneumonia

In this CIDRAP [coverage](#) of an article published in an early online edition of *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*, a study in Italian children who were seen in the emergency department for pneumonia found the virus in five children, with a disease severity that resembled influenza A. The study evaluated data from four flu seasons from 2008–09 to 2011–12 at a pediatric clinic in Milan.

7. Canadian Comedian Rick Mercer's Impassioned Support of Influenza Vaccination!

Rick Mercer is an extremely popular and talented comedian in Canada and is well known for the "Rick's Rant" segment on his show. This Tuesday the [Rant](#) was focused on Rick's impassioned recommendation that people get out and get a Flu shot.

8. Summit Relaunches the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS)

In response to Hurricane Sandy and possible losses of seasonal influenza vaccine among vaccine providers, the National Influenza Vaccine Summit has re-opened IVATS (Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System) on its [web page](#). The information is available by clicking on under "Looking for Influenza Vaccine for your Clinic" in the lower right corner of the webpage, or click [here](#) for a direct link to the PDF.

IVATS is a resource for physicians looking to purchase influenza vaccine and contains information from approved, enrolled and participating wholesale vaccine distributors or manufacturers of U.S. licensed influenza vaccine. Information on the site will be updated throughout the 2012–2013 influenza vaccination season.

Please share this resource with any providers in your jurisdiction who may have questions about where to purchase influenza vaccine for the current influenza season. For questions about IVATS, please contact [Diane Peterson](#) at the Immunization Action Coalition.

9. 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine Information Statements Are Now Available

The [influenza vaccine information statements](#) have recently been updated. Both the TIV and LAIV VISs, as well as the TIV Large Print edition, have been updated, and RTF files also are available. All are dated 7/2/2012. These editions have been converted to the updated VIS format, but the text in both VISs is identical to that in last year's influenza VISs. Note that there will be minor updates in the ACIP influenza recommendations, but these do not affect the VIS language.

10. Summit Website Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!

Remember to visit the [Summit web site](#) for the latest on influenza immunization resources and to view archived copies of the weekly updates.